CHEMAINUS RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

September 2003

Approved by:

D Heath

Dick Heath
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Sept. 6/03

Nancy Wilkin

Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Jan 15/04

CHEMAINUS RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** purpose of Chemainus River Provincial Park is to provide river-based recreation opportunities in a near-urban area. Part of the Chemainus River and watershed is protected in this 103 hectare park. Established in 1959 because of its long history of use for steelhead fishing and day use excursions, the park is well known for viewing the spectacular summer steelhead and coho salmon runs and providing a variety of day use recreational opportunities. The park contains numerous deep swimming pools and forested habitat where visitors can enjoy picnicking, camping, hiking, swimming and wildlife viewing. No facilities are provided but recent land additions to the park could support group camping and related facilities. Part of the rational for the park additions was to obtain more river frontage to enhance both the recreation and conservation values.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to protect a portion of the river in its natural condition, riparian habitat and a buffer of mature second growth forest. The park protects high quality steelhead habitat with a significant summer steelhead population, which is one of only a few that exist on eastern Vancouver Island. Forested habitats in the park are ecologically diverse, and wildlife values are typical of second-growth forests on Vancouver Island. The river's floodplain and associated riparian vegetation are a sensitive ecosystem.

The park also contributes to the representation of two under-represented ecosystems – the Nanaimo Lowlands Ecosection and the Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern very dry maritime (xm1) biogeoclimatic variant. These ecosystems are under intense pressure from urban and forest development, and any protected area that contributes to their representation may be considered important.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Increasing and unregulated use, lack of facilities resulting in site degradation	➢ Install a park gate and large boulders to stop vehicles from parking on side roads. ➢ Install park boundary signs in correct locations. ➢ Develop a strategy to deal with vandalism and dumping through the provision of a parking lot and camping facilities; investigate options to transfer the park to the Cowichan Valley Regional District for regional park purposes.
Loss of habitat and loss of water quality from adjacent logging operations	➢ Work with the Ministry of Forests and logging companies to ensure that adjacent forest development does not impact the river and other park values.
Illegal tree cutting and use of off road bikes and ATVs	➢ Work with local residents and users of a nearby Capital Regional District park regarding appropriate park uses. Provide educational information on appropriate uses.

Zoning

Intensive Recreation Zone – covers the access road and day use area along the river's edge which represents an area of approximately 15 hectares or 15% of the park. The objective of this zone is to provide a variety of readily accessible, family-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

Natural Environment Zone – covers the remainder of the park to reflect the recreation and conservation values. This is an area of approximately 88 hectares or 85% of the park. The objective is to maintain or regain naturally evolving ecosystems while providing for complementary low impact outdoor recreation opportunities.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	Chemainus River Provincial Park contributes 2.18% to the representation of the Nanaimo Lowland Ecosection which has only 1.41% protected provincially.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☒	Chemainus River Provincial Park makes a small contribution of 1.2% to the representation of the CWHxm1 variant which has only 2.07% protected provincially.
Special Features	☒	Sensitive ecosystem related to the floodplain and riparian vegetation – recognized by the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory Program. Chemainus River is home to salmon and steelhead, the park is significant for its high quality summer run (this population represents the southernmost wild steelhead run on eastern Vancouver Island).
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	Historical use by blue-listed Roosevelt elk -- may return and increase as second-growth forest matures and more river frontage becomes protected
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Determine habitat value to Roosevelt elk

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☐	Not Applicable
destination	☒	Part of the Lake Cowichan recreation destination corridor/area; the park has recreation destination potential if developed and promoted
travel corridor	☒	Potentially part of the Trans Canada Trail
local recreation	☒	Day use is increasing annually and includes swimming, hiking, picnicking and wildlife viewing
Special Opportunities	☐	None known at this time
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☐	None known at this time

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☒	Chemainus First Nation and MOF have conducted an inventory of traditional uses and culturally modified trees (CMTs) along the river
Special Feature	☒	Remnants of abandoned railway grade

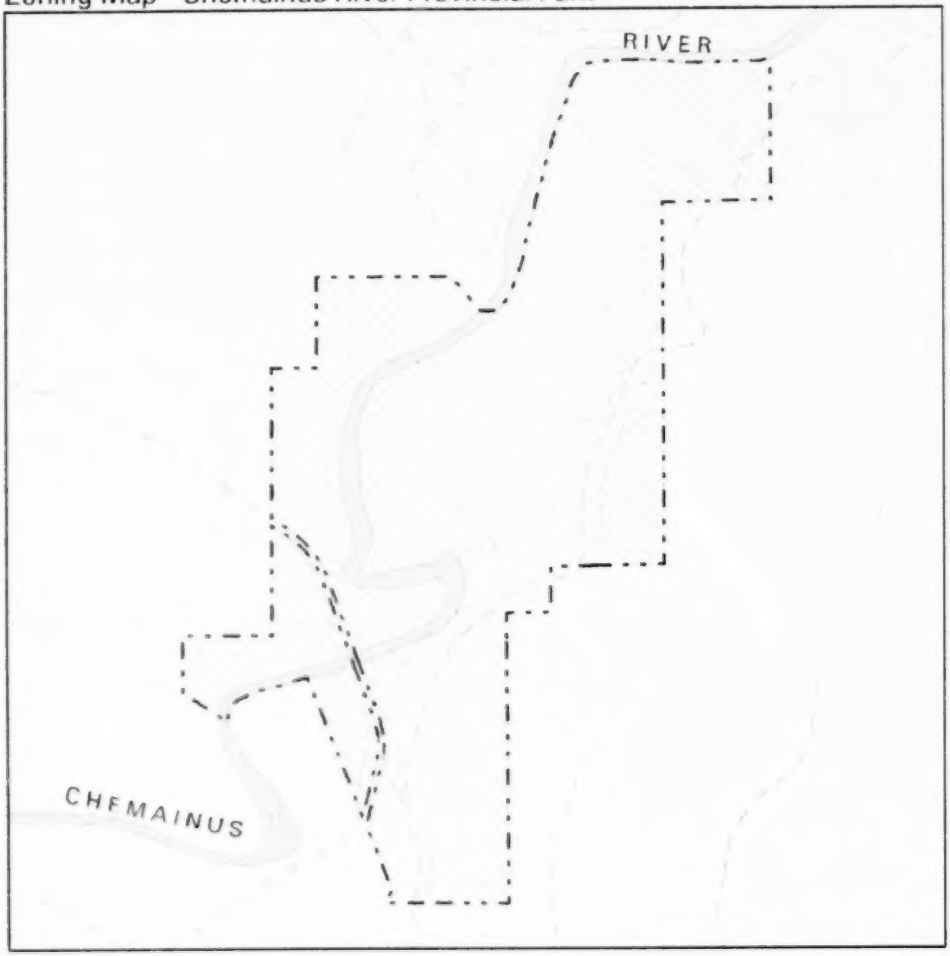
Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☐	Not Applicable
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of protected areas on Vancouver Island, potentially part of the Trans Canada Trail. Complements recreation opportunities available at Cowichan River and Koksilah River provincial parks.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Not Applicable
Partnerships	☐	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	☒	Site degradation from improper use patterns, illegal tree cutting, increased stream sedimentation due to adjacent land use, decrease in water quality, loss of cultural artifacts (e.g. CMTs) if present
Relationship to Other Strategies	☒	As a result of the Goal 2 recommendation of the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan, 17 hectares was added to the park in 1996 and an additional 16 hectares was secured from Weyerhaeuser to provide more river frontage.

Area: 103 hectares

Date of establishment: December 30, 1959

Zoning Map - Chemainus River Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83

Intensive Recreation
Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary

Produced in Mar 2003 by Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection by MSRM, Decision Support Services

This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.